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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of an evaluation of the delivery of a pilot parenthood education program at Monifeith High School in Angus, Scotland. The program was developed as part of Save the Children, Scotland's 3-year Positive Parenting Project. The report is targeted at those responsible for the delivery of personal and social education to adolescents in the school setting and recommends a number of ways in which the program can be further developed. Introductory sections of the report cover the project's background, objectives, policy context in the UK and Europe, the Scottish context, and the program's design and methodology. Findings from the evaluation, which involved a student questionnaire and an interview with the teacher, are then presented in the following categories: (1) changed perceptions of parenting; (2) responsibilities; (3) improved understanding of parent/caregiver; (4) affect on relationship with parents/caregivers; and (5) course content and delivery. The report concludes by noting that the course had a positive impact on pupils by helping them to think more objectively about the parenting role and the concurrent responsibilities of parenthood. The report offers several recommendations for course delivery and material, such as incorporating parenthood education into the personal and social education curriculum and team teaching. Appendices include an outline of course sessions and the evaluation form. (EV)

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Understanding Parents, Understanding Parenthood

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An Education for Parenthood Course Piloted at Monifeith High School, Angus

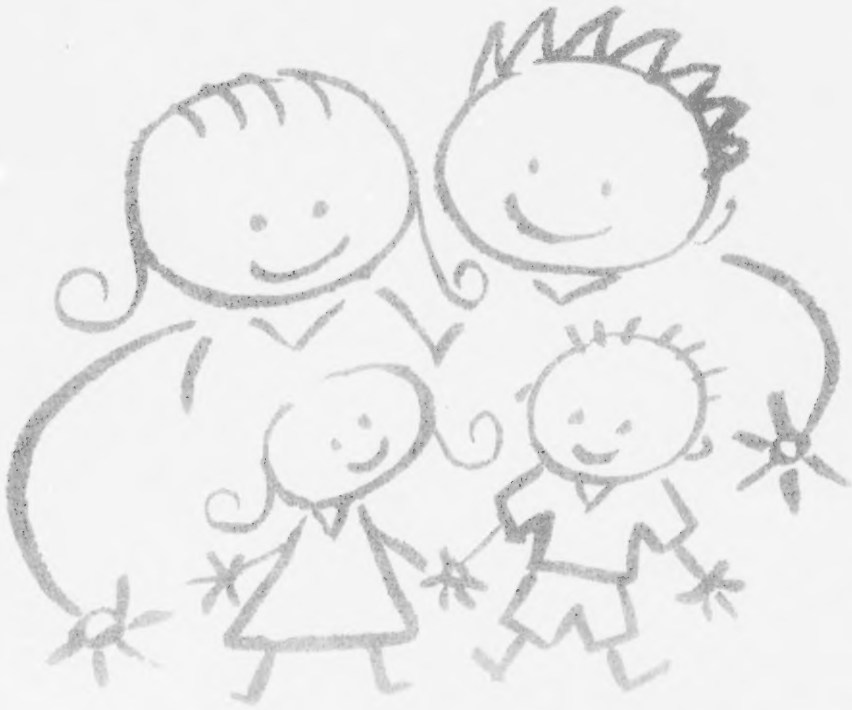
Save the Children Scotland and Children and Families in Rural Angus would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this project.

In particular we would like to mention the enthusiastic support of Mr. Jeremy Morris, Principal Teacher of Guidance with responsibility for Personal and Social Education, Monifieth High School, Angus and the co-operation of all the pupils in class 2P1.

We would also like to mention the invaluable help provided by Marion Currie in the production of this report, in particular for the excellent graphs.

Understanding Parents Understanding Parenthood

A report by Elizabeth Cutting & Lynne Tammi



ISBN 1 84187 015 3 Price: £6.50

Introduction

This report is the result of an evaluation which took place following the delivery of a pilot education for parenthood programme, undertaken at Monifieth High School, Angus, in the North East of Scotland. It is targeted at those responsible for the delivery of personal and social education to adolescents in the school setting and recommends a number of ways in which the programme can be further developed.

The need to provide a course of this nature was identified by a significant number of parents involved with Save the Children's national Positive Parenting Project in Scotland.

Many of these parents feel that schools should try to equip young people with the necessary skills and information to allow them to make informed choices about parenthood and to help them develop a greater awareness of the responsibilities and implications of becoming a parent. As a leading children's rights organisation we fully support this important principal.

Background

In 1997, following the award of a substantial grant by the National Lottery Charities Board, Save the Children Scotland started work on a three year project to identify and develop appropriate support structures for parents in four different communities in Scotland.

This Project, known as the Positive Parenting Project, has been actively working with a large number of parents, children and other agencies and organisations throughout Scotland over the last three years. The Project is funded until December 1999.

The local authority known as Angus is a large rural area in the North East of Scotland and is one of the four areas covered by the Project.

In Angus the work with parents has been undertaken as a partnership between Save the Children and Angus Council and is known as Children and Families in Rural Angus. This partnership was established in February 1997 to develop a strategic response to the increasing levels of disadvantage experienced by children and families in Angus.

Local research, undertaken during the planning stages of the Project provided a greater insight into the issues facing such families.

The Project has one full time member of staff, funded until December 1999 through the National Lottery Charities Board as part of the National Positive Parenting Project. A member of Angus Council Social Work Department has also been seconded part-time to the Project.

Project Objectives

A major part of the Parenting Project is focused on identifying the support needs of parents and highlighting the issues that they feel are important. As part of this process the Project carried out an initial needs assessment with parents.

In Angus, this research - undertaken with Education Staff, Social Workers, Health Workers and members of the community - identified the following key issues and gaps in services for children and families residing in the area:

- informal support systems for young parents
- informal support systems for parents of adolescents
- parenthood education for adolescents (not parenting skills)
- access to information around services available to children and families.

We have responded to each of these issues in a variety of ways, details of which can be found in the Project report.

This report however, focuses on our response to the need for parenthood education for young people as a way of highlighting and raising awareness about the responsibilities and implications of parenthood.

As an issue, this was frequently and repeatedly identified by a large number of parents across the Project in Scotland.

Policy Context - UK and Europe

Parenting, as a policy issue, has in recent years become the focus of a great deal of political thinking. Parenting and families have been subjected to an unprecedented level of public scrutiny in response to rising concerns about crime levels, childcare, school exclusion and teenage pregnancies.

This has led to calls for families and parents to be better supported in the task of raising their children. An acknowledgement of the state's role in providing appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians is outlined under Article 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child - rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children'.

In November 1998, the Home Office published the consultation document Supporting Families which sets out its proposals for 'strengthening families'. This acknowledgement that families are under stress and in need of support is clearly linked to the serious consequences this has for children.

Perhaps the most significant element of this Green Paper is that it is the first policy document on the family ever to have been produced by a UK Government and indicates the importance that is now attached to family policy.

One of the areas covered by this document relates to the current levels of teenage pregnancies and the concerns that this has raised.

In 1996, 8,829 young women under 16 in England and Wales became pregnant. Figures show that over half had an abortion while 4,279 went on to give birth. In Scotland, during the same period, 460 young women under 16 had abortions while 437 went on to give birth.

Interest in the late 1990s from politicians, the public and the media about teenage pregnancy has created the erroneous impression that the numbers of young single mothers are increasing.

The numbers have in fact been falling and overall the rates have dropped considerably over the last thirty years. What is significant is that the figures for the UK do not compare favourably with figures elsewhere in Europe.

The rates for England and Wales, followed closely by Scotland and Northern Ireland are higher than in any other economically developed country; with the notable exception of the USA, Canada and New Zealand.

While many European countries effectively managed to reduce their teenage pregnancy rates during the 1980s, the UK was noticeably failing in this respect.

In the early 1990s, specific targets were set to reduce the rate of teenage conceptions by the year 2000. These targets have not been met and have since been dropped at a UK level.

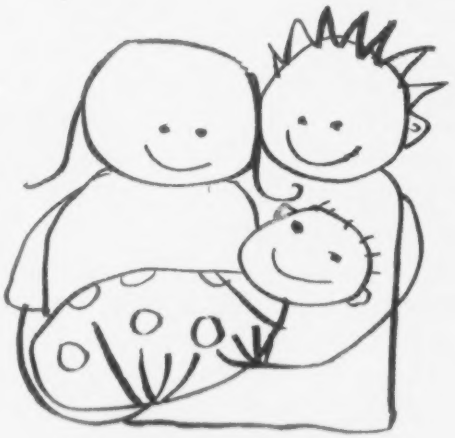
In 1997, a National Task Group was established to explore the issues relating to unintended and unwanted teenage pregnancy.

In 1998, this task was taken on by the Social Exclusion Unit, which was directed by the Prime Minister to devise strategies to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancies and to minimise the risk of social exclusion for teenage parents.

While their remit covered England only, the report's findings highlighted a number of significant factors which may provide an explanation for the high rates experienced by the UK and a number of other countries. In such countries high rates tend to be characterised by:

- low use of contraception (by international standards)
- high levels of income inequality
- poor educational achievement
- difficult or unstable family relationships
- family breakdown.

In addition, the report found that three key factors contribute to the high rates experienced in the UK: low expectations of the future among many young people; ignorance about contraception and the reality of life as a parent and mixed messages from adults about sex and relationships.



In Tomorrow's Parents, Hope et al (1997) argue that young people are positively influenced by parenthood education in schools and that their relationships with teachers, parents and one another can be improved. (Family Policy Studies Centre; Summer 1997).

These findings are further evidenced by the positive outcomes achieved by The Parenthood Project. This project was founded by the Gulbenkian Foundation and hosted by the Children's Society in the Greater Manchester Area over a two-year period.

The main findings of The Parenthood Project were that the introduction of parenthood education in schools could:

- increase the quality of life for the next generation of families
- improve the way in which young people handle life within their own families
- help develop young people's communication skills in all their relationships
- establish good parenting as the foundation for other aspects of personal and social education, eg: drugs awareness, environmental education and community involvement.

Countries that report low or falling levels of teenage parenthood tend to have a varied range of practical programmes available to young people. These aim to provide information about the implications of unprotected sex, sex education, communication skills, assertiveness training and life options programmes.

Scottish Context

In Scotland, a high proportion of teenage pregnancies occur in the most disadvantaged areas with many teenage mothers, already socially and educationally disadvantaged, finding themselves excluded from further education as well as employment and other opportunities.

The Social Inclusion Strategy has set a target of reducing the pregnancy rate among 13-15 year olds by 20% between 1995 and 2010. While sex education is a compulsory element of the Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum in England and Wales this is not the case in Scotland and parenting education is not normally included as part of this course.

A major consultation exercise with young people in Scotland (Our Lives) clearly indicated that their experience of sex education in schools had generally been inadequate.

Young people feel that sex education should be provided at a much earlier stage and in a more appropriate and applicable format. It should also be presented by someone who is trained and skilled in relating to young people on such matters.

Many young people also think that sex education should be introduced towards the end of primary school and that the significance of peer pressure should be acknowledged and addressed (Ritchie, 1999).

A recent report produced by The Scottish Executive, Supporting Parenting in Scotland (1999) recommended the development of additional work in relation to preparation for parenthood, including specific work with young people. Providing a balanced programme of sex education, parenthood awareness and education along with communication skills and assertiveness training is recognised, especially by those countries with lower rates of teenage pregnancies than the UK, as an effective early prevention strategy.

Education for Parenthood - Angus

In response to local research in Angus and extensive discussions with the Head of Services, Angus Council (Schools); a presentation was made by Children and Families in Rural Angus to Senior Guidance Staff in February 1998.

This explored the possibility of piloting the Education for Parenthood programme with a group from Year 2 in one or two secondary schools.

The Children's Society Parenthood Education Pack is designed specifically for teachers and those providing social education.

The pack contains imaginative and carefully planned exercises to encourage young people to discuss all aspects of parenthood - from rights and responsibilities to health and safety.

It takes a multicultural approach and challenges prevailing gender stereotypes of parenting and family roles. It does not advocate a single correct formula for parenting, but reflects a diversity of family structures, lifestyles and cultures.

At a meeting for Guidance Staff in the Angus area, each of the secondary schools expressed a high level of interest in the course, with Monifieth High School making a firm offer to participate in the pilot.

Particular emphasis was placed on targeting the lower years pupils, aged between 13 and 14 years, as the majority of work on this issue is generally undertaken with senior pupils.

Staff felt that a parenthood course at an earlier stage would reach those most in need, e.g. those who do not continue their education beyond age 16 years.

In addition, it was recognised that many young people are becoming involved in relationships before they reach the legal age of consent.

Staff felt that if they were to engage young people in an awareness raising exercise regarding the responsibilities of parenthood, this should occur at an early stage.

The Parenthood Education programme at Monifieth High School sought to address this gap in provision and to explore with pupils how such a course could be adapted or expanded to effectively meet their information needs at an important stage in their development and maturity.

Programme Design and Methodology

Scheme of Work at Monifieth High School

The scheme of work outlined below, selected from the Children's Society Education for Parenthood Pack, was designed and implemented by the Project Worker, Children and Families in Rural Angus, and the Guidance Teacher at Monifieth High School.

The programme was delivered over a six-week period through the Personal and Social Education curriculum to a mixed sex group of year 2 pupils (13 - 14 years). The session topics were:

- The Parenting Questionnaire (Appendix 1)
- What it means to be a parent
- Who knows best?
- The Parents' Contract
- Thinking Ahead

Sessions were delivered in an informal setting with a strong emphasis on paired and group work. The programme facilitators actively contributed to the debate when appropriate.

The Circle Time technique was utilised at the end of each session to address specific issues raised. As evaluation was considered a key element of the programme, detailed recordings were made of each session.

Pupils completed an in-depth evaluation form after the final session (Appendix 2) and a one-to-one interview was undertaken with the Guidance Teacher.

These findings were used to inform the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

In April 1998, the six-week Education for Parenthood Course began with a class at Year 2 level. In all, 27 pupils ranging in age from 13 to 14 years took part - 9 females and 18 males.

The course required an extensive degree of active participation involving written exercises, group work and group discussion.

This approach was designed to focus the minds of these young people and raise awareness around the responsibilities and realities of becoming a parent.

They were also required to construct 'Parental Contracts' outlining what they would agree to do as parents and to assess how becoming a parent would impact upon their education, work plans, leisure time and spending capacity.

These exercises helped the group to understand how becoming a parent can have a major impact on their lives and to think through these concepts in terms of their own personal ambitions and career plans.

Evaluation - Pupils' Views

At the final session, the evaluation form that pupils completed (Appendix 2) was designed to elicit a broad range of quantitative and qualitative information about the course and to assess the degree of impact it had made in terms of raising awareness.

This was completed by all those who took part in the course, thus providing a complete response rate.

Some questionnaires carried a hidden code and were administered only to male pupils. The remaining un-coded questionnaires were administered to female pupils. This allowed the analysis to take an accurate account of gender in assessing the impact of the course.

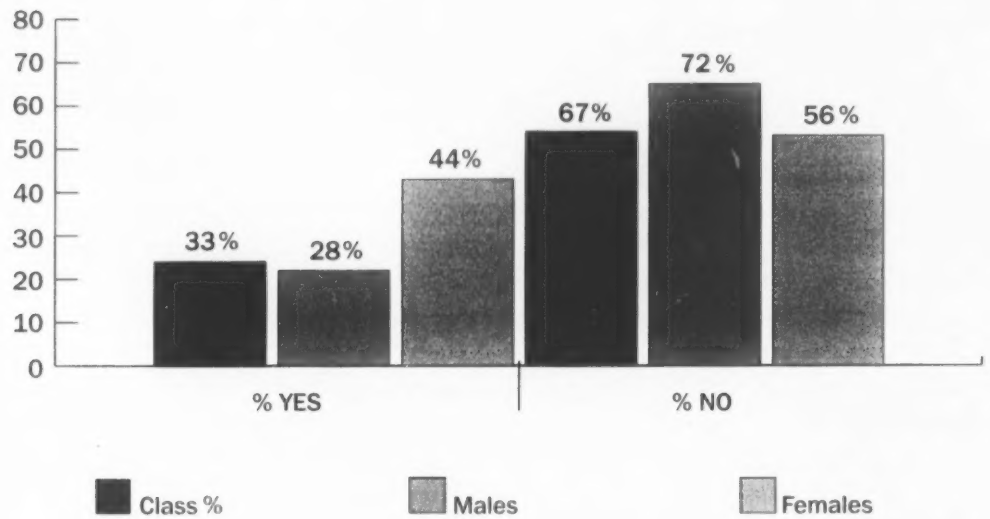
Pupils were unaware of this distinction, but we were anxious to understand how male and female attitudes differed both in terms of their current views and attitudes towards parenting and in terms of any future decisions they may make.

We were also interested to know if any specific gender related differences existed which should be addressed in delivering future courses.

Findings

More girls (44%) than boys (28%) admitted to having previously considered what being a parent might be like before they took the course. However two thirds (67%) had previously not given parenthood much thought at all.

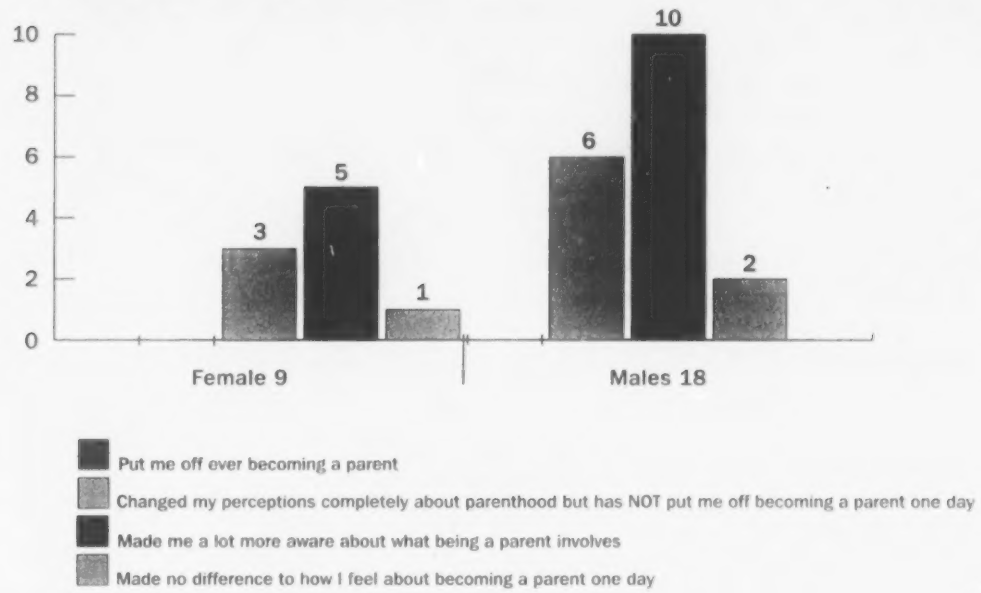
Q1. Before you did this course had you ever given much thought to what being a parent actually entailed?



Changed Perceptions of Parenting

When asked to assess how the course had affected pupils' perceptions of parenting, the majority revealed that it had made a significant impact on them.

Q2 Now that you have completed the course, how has it affected your perceptions of parenthood?



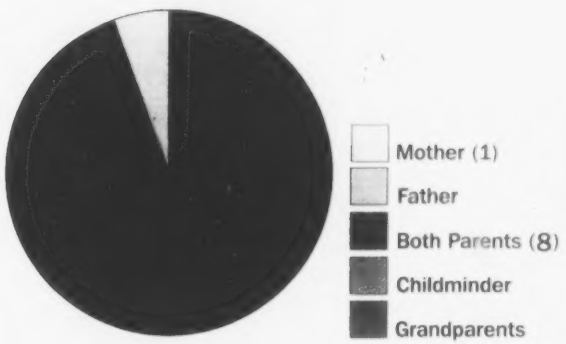
Five females and ten males claimed that the course had made then a lot more aware about the range of tasks and skills involved in being a parent. Three females and six males claimed that it had changed their perception completely about becoming a parent, but not to the extent that it would later deter them.

Two boys and one girl claimed that the course had made no difference to how they felt about becoming a parent and nobody claimed to be deterred completely from the prospect of future parenthood.

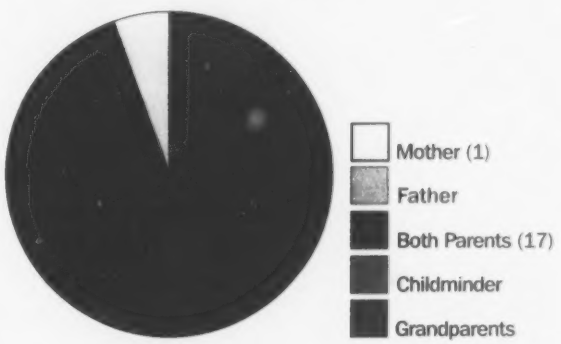
Responsibilities

Pupils were asked who they felt should be mainly responsible for the care and upbringing of a child (Q3).

Q3. Responses - Females (9)



Q3. Responses - Males (18)



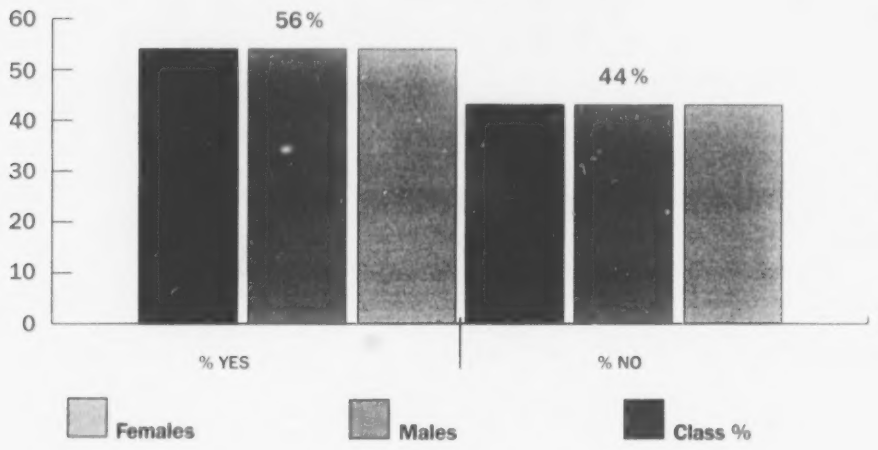
Only two pupils (1 male and 1 female) felt that the mother should be the one mainly responsible; the remainder of the class (17 males and 8 females) agreed that this responsibility rests equally with both parents.

Improved Understanding of Parent/Carer

We tried to ascertain whether the course had given pupils a better understanding of their parents/carers in terms of the decisions they have to make in relation to them.

Fifty six percent of both males and females agreed that the course had given them a much better insight into how their parents or carers behaved towards them and that as a result they now had a better understanding of the reasoning behind their decision making. Pupils were asked to explain in their own words how they now felt about this, in the light of what they had learned on the course.

Q4. Do you feel that the course has helped to give a better understanding of your own parent(s) or carers and the decisions they have to make in relation to you?



Replies indicated that pupils had made a significant link between the decisions their parents/ carers made, with the need to balance their responsibilities as parents.

They revealed an increased understanding of the difficulties their parents' face in balancing their parental responsibilities with the other responsibilities in their lives and with the stresses and strains which this can sometimes lead to.

Responses indicated that both males and females had a greater awareness of the sacrifices their parents have to make and a greater empathy with their need to make decisions in their best interests.

Pupils also indicated that they recognised their parents/carers' desire to be protective of them and accepted that certain rules, which they previously may not have agreed with, e.g. being home at a certain time, were made with their protection and safety in mind.

"I think I now understand the stress they are under and why they are protective".

"I now understand why my parents do some of the things they do and if they stop me going out until 3.00am it's for my own good".

"I feel that the amount of pressure on them is a lot and they cope very well".

"I understand how difficult it is being a parent. I understand now that when my Mum or Dad make a decision that doesn't let me do something, they are only doing what they think is best for me".

"Yes, now I understand when I get into trouble it is only because they care for me. This course has helped me to understand how to be a parent when I am older".

"I feel a lot more understanding about my parents, like that it must be hard work looking after me".

"Yes it has made a difference because now I know how hard it is for my Mum".

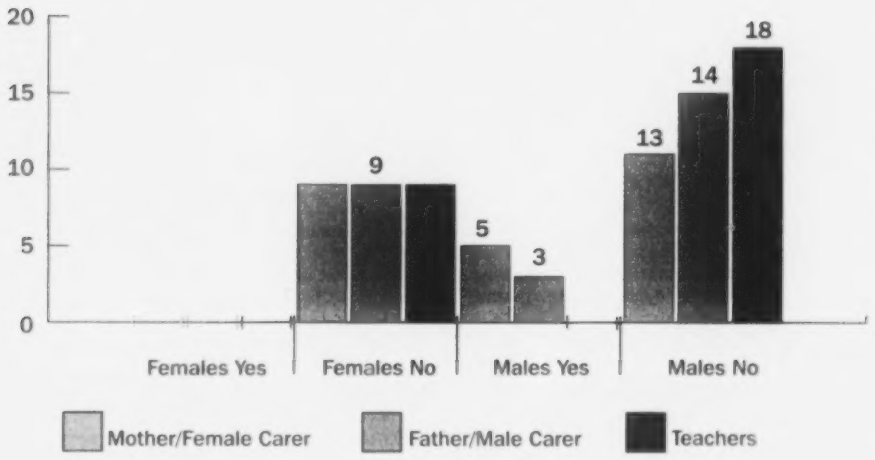
Affect on Relationship with Parents/Carers

When asked if the course had helped to improve relationships with parents, carers or teachers, the results varied a little between males and females.

All of the female pupils felt that the course had not changed their relationship with their parent/carer, whereas 27 percent of the males (5 pupils) felt that the course had a positive affect.

Five boys felt that their relationship had improved with the mother/female carer, with three of these five boys also indicating that their relationship had also improved with their father/male carer.

Q5. Do you feel that the course has improved your relationship with the people in your life who have responsibilities towards you?



When asked to explain how their relationship had changed, the reasons given were again explained in terms of the increased understanding pupils now had of their parents/carers and what is expected of them in that role.

"I know why they were so strict".

"It has changed my relationship with my Mum and Dad because I realise why they say you can't have this or you can't have that".

"I said yes to my Mum because my Dad does not live with us anymore. I understand now what a difficult job my Mum has got with working, cleaning and looking after us".

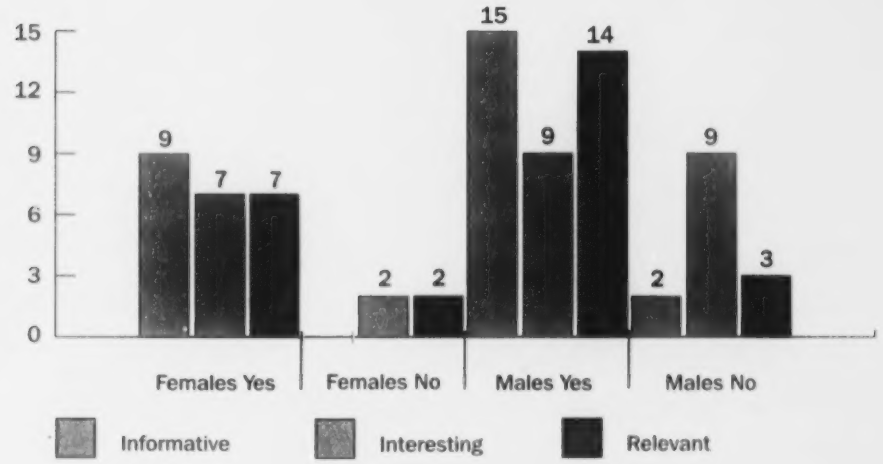
"I am a lot closer now, I am not afraid to tell things to my Mum".

These replies reveal that the course did have a positive effect on some pupil's relationships with their parent/carer as well as raising awareness and increasing their understanding of the issues to be considered in becoming a parent. These findings are in line with predicted outcomes for the course, as stated earlier.

Course - Content, Delivery and Suggestions

In terms of the course content, the majority of pupils found the course material to be relevant and informative. Seven females and fourteen males thought the material used was relevant and all nine females and fifteen males found the course informative. However, only half of the male pupils (nine) felt that the course was interesting, while seven of the female pupils thought so.

Q6. Do you feel the course material was: Relevant; Interesting; Informative?



Topics not Covered

When asked if the course could have included other topics that were not covered - three females and five males indicated positively.

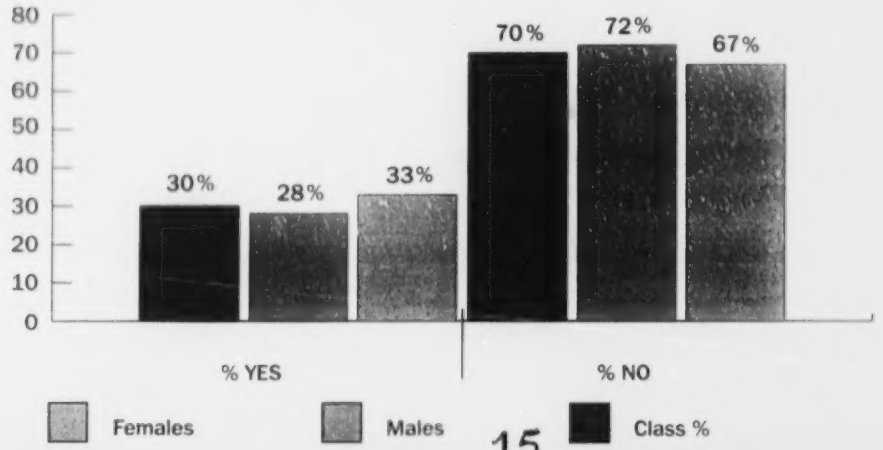
When asked to expand on this reply and indicate the topics they felt could have been included, we received a range of replies.

The female pupils indicated that they would have liked more information about the practical aspects of caring for a baby; such as feeding, washing, handling a child and changing nappies.

The male pupils had a different set of additional needs and these related mainly to information on sex education, safe sex, sexually transmitted diseases and parenthood in relation to parents with a disability.

They also expressed a need for more discussion around the life changes that parents have to make when they have children and more information and awareness raising about how children feel and react to decisions that are made by their parents in relation to them.

Q7. Could the course have included other topics which you feel should have been covered?

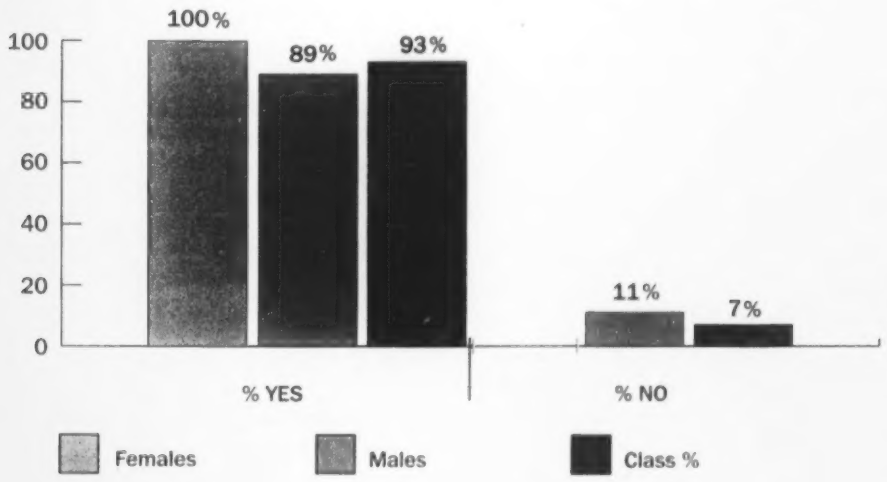


Time spent on each topic

When asked to comment about the amount of time spent on each topic in the course, the general consensus was that it was sufficient.

Only two pupils, both males, indicating that they would have liked more time to discuss safe sex and sex education and more time spent on how to take care of a child.

Q8. Was the time spent on each course subject sufficient?

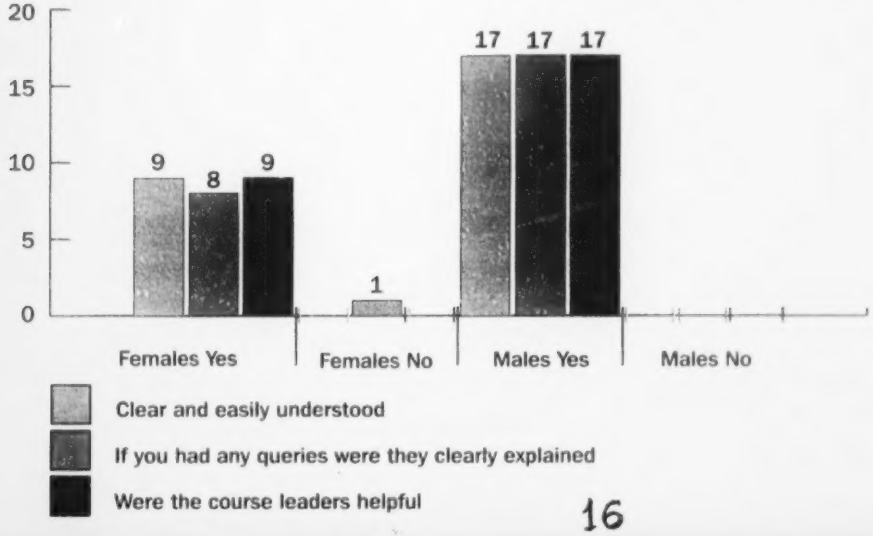


Course Delivery

In relation to the course delivery, all of the replies received (9 female and 17 male) indicated that the material was clear and easily understood and that the course leaders were helpful.

All of the pupils, with the exception of one female, indicated that any queries they had were clearly explained by the course leaders. Overall pupils appeared to be happy with the way the course was delivered.

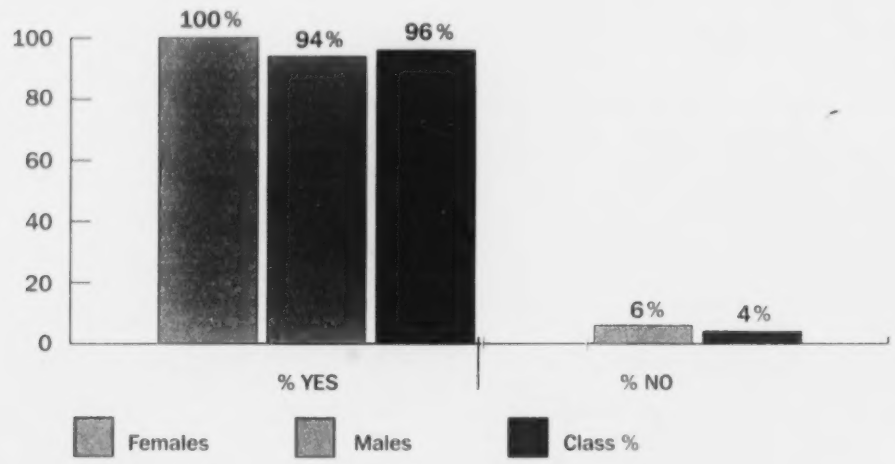
Q9 Do you feel that the course delivery was:
Clear and easily understood?
Were the course leaders helpful?
If you had any queries were they clearly explained?



When asked to comment about the suitability of using a Personal and Social Education (PSE) class to deliver a course of this nature (Q10), the majority thought it was suitable.

One male pupil though that a hospital, family clinic, youth club or after school club would be a more suitable option as a venue. Pupils who thought that the PSE class was suitable also offered some suggestions for alternative venues, which again included after school clubs and the games or gym hall. Another pupil felt that using books, television programmes and leaflets would also be a suitable way of delivering such a course.

Q10. Do you think that a PSE class in school is the most suitable way to deliver a course like this?



Pupils were asked to add any further comments they had about the course in general and this drew just one response from a pupil who felt that using more videos and games would make the learning process more 'fun'.

Evaluation - Teacher's Views

At the end of the six-week period the Guidance Teacher involved in the delivery of the course was interviewed by the Project Worker to elicit his views about the sessions, their content and the impact he felt they had on pupils. These findings are reported below.

Course Delivery

The presence of an external worker co-facilitating the delivery of the sessions with a member of staff conveyed a sense of importance to the course, as it introduced a different, alternative approach from the norm. The presence of another adult, who was not a member of staff, also made the delivery less formal and introduced an additional adult input and viewpoint.

The informality, which resulted from this type of delivery, led to a higher enquiry rate from pupils than would normally be the case in a typical classroom setting.

Pupils adapted very quickly and easily to this 'team teaching' method as evidenced by their willingness to direct questions to, and seek support from, the external worker.

The importance of having a teacher present, who knew the pupils and who had experience of delivering social education material, is an important element in successfully delivering a course of this nature.

The teacher in question was familiar with the material and comfortable about responding to the broad range of issues which arose.

The length of the course (six weeks) was considered to be adequate and fitted in well with the term structure.

Course Content

The activities in the session material were considered diverse enough to address the differing family structures, lifestyles and cultures of participants.

The course was particularly effective in challenging prevailing gender stereotypes of parenting and family roles with Session 3 - Who Knows Best (Appendix 1) raising the issues of the male role in the family, the use of physical violence and the parenting of boys.

However, too much emphasis was placed on written exercises, which could be considered too 'curriculum based' by participants.

Younger pupils and pupils with special learning needs could experience difficulty with certain types of written and analytical work, which would affect their ability to contribute to the course.

It was suggested that the introduction of more active learning techniques would enable all pupils to participate fully.

The parenting material fitted in well with the wider sex education material and could be usefully used in the future as a starter module. During the course pupils raised a number of important issues in relation to sex education and sexual awareness in a very informal way.

The material therefore provides an ideal opportunity, not only to raise awareness of parenting with pupils, but also to lead them on quite naturally to the sex education elements of the social education curriculum in a more informal and relaxed way.

Conclusion

The course had a positive impact on pupils. By raising awareness it helped them to think more objectively about the parenting role and the concurrent responsibilities of parenthood.

It also successfully challenged perceptions about parenting without seeming to deter young people from becoming parents at some point in the future. This awareness raising also helped them to recognise that the responsibilities of parenthood require to be shared equally between both parents.

For more than half of the pupils the course had a positive influence on their relationships with parents/carers, leading to an improved understanding and empathy with decisions taken in relation to them.

For both males and females, this led to their understanding that the need to protect and care for children sometimes means making unpopular decisions.

Over one quarter of the male pupils reported that the course helped to improve relationships with their parents/carer.

This additional outcome demonstrates the potential of such a course to positively affect the relationship between young males and their parents/carers at an important point in their development and maturity.

While the majority of pupils found the course content to be relevant and informative, a significant number indicated that they would like to see more use made of videos and games.

Female pupils expressed an interest in further childcare information, while male pupils wanted additional information on sex education and sexual awareness.

While the course was not originally intended to cover these elements, they may need to be considered as part of a wider programme on sex education, parenting and child care, in which each of these aspects can be covered in a complimentary and inclusive way.

Overall, the evaluation found that using a Personal and Social Education class to deliver the course appears to be an appropriate and effective method and venue. Pupils also found the materials and course delivery suitable and clearly understood.

In terms of meeting the intended outcomes, the evaluation has shown that this was achieved. Overall the course was successful and well received by both males and females, with consistent attendance throughout.

Recommendations

The evaluation of the Education for Parenthood course at Monifieth High School has revealed a number of issues, which could help to inform the development of future courses and build on this initial success.

The following recommendations are suggested for consideration by those responsible for the delivery of Personal and Social Education to adolescents in the school setting.

Course Delivery

- Consideration should be given to incorporating Parenthood Education into the Personal and Social Education curriculum as early as is considered appropriate, to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to access the material at a crucial stage in their lives.

- Team teaching with an external worker is an effective method of course delivery, providing both facilitators are familiar and comfortable with the material and issues which may arise.

- Appropriate training should be offered to potential course facilitators. This could be delivered to staff at in-service training events or by the production of a core training pack that could be made available to interested staff.

Course Material

- Consideration should be given to younger pupils and pupils with special learning needs in terms of their support requirements, with particular reference to written work and questionnaire analysis.

- Pupils could benefit from more active learning techniques, for example: role-play, video, group discussions, prepared scenarios.

- The materials used could be incorporated into the wider Personal and Social Education curriculum as an introduction to, or a starter module in, sex education or parenting.

Future developments - Angus

In February 1999 the main findings of this report were presented to the Education Department of Angus Council.

The Council accepted the report's findings, and from October 1999, elements of the Education for Parenthood Course will be delivered in each of the eight secondary schools in Angus.

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Session 1 - The Parenting Questionnaire

To raise awareness of the skills, attitudes and knowledge that parents require
Improve personal communication skills - listening, questioning, observing, feeding back

Individual completion of questionnaire
Group discussion around levels of scoring
Small group exercise looking at the skills, attitudes and knowledge required of parents by drawing up a list of qualities that a parents needs

A parent needs to:
Change nappies
support child
cook
child first
give love and attention
be responsible
support the child financially
care

Important values and attitudes for parents are:
Treat everyone the same
wanting to support
be friendly - don't get into fights
financial management
set ground rules around: time to come in, go to bed etc
understanding
respectful
patient
well mannered

It is useful for parents to know:
How to cope in an emergency
emergency aid
how to stop the baby crying (feed, change, comfort)

A number of participants produced a 'Job Advert' for a parent as a follow up to this session.

Session 2 - What it means to be a parent

To enable participants to explore what parenthood involves, utilising communication and decision making skills.

In pairs, participants were asked to look at photographs of parents carrying out different activities and to rank them in order of importance. Rankings were then discussed in groups of four, looking at what features of parenthood were most and least important, and if there were differences in the most and least important features for mothers compared with fathers.

A whole group exercise asked participants to agree and list the most and least important features of being a parent.

Most important features of being a parent:
Keep children safe, love and affection, partner for support, health, attention, be encouraging, access to education, giving time, secure relationship, food.

Least important features of being a parent:
Getting the child christened, physical/mental abuse, ignoring, smoking, taking children on holiday, two parent families.

Differences in the most and least important features of parenthood for mothers compared with fathers:
Of the twenty seven participants present, twenty five stated that there was no difference and that responsibilities should be shared equally, one (male) felt that women should carry most responsibility and one (female) felt that men should have a lot more responsibility.

Session 3 - Who knows best

To raise awareness around the difficulties/dilemmas that parents face and to highlight the various sources of advice and support that they can access by engaging participants in decision making and problem solving activities.

In groups of four, participants were asked to look at a number of set problem, choose one and to write a letter to a 'Page' as if the problem were their own. They should then pass their letter to the other members of their group who would reply as one of the following:

Agony aunt/parent/carer/other adult, or friend.

Participants were then asked to consider the advice given and decide which was the most appropriate action to take.

A whole group discussion looked at the difficulties around deciding what was right and the differences in advice given from males and females.

Outcomes
Of the twenty three participants, three chose the advice of a parent, three of a friend, nine of an agony aunt and eight felt unable to choose, opting to make their own decision.

A number of male participants made reference to 'teaching children to look after themselves' and the use of physical violence. This led to a group discussion facilitated by the P.S.E. teacher around domestic violence and the effects that it can have on family relationships.

Session 4 - The parents contract

Aim
To raise awareness of the 'contract' that parents make when they form a relationship and have a child.

Method of delivery
In pairs, participants were asked to draw up a list of topics that should be covered by a contract between two parents (married or unmarried) and their children.

In groups of four, participants were asked to discuss their topic lists and agree the contents for their parental contracts.

Outcomes
The most common topics in the parental contracts were as follows:

- look after our child
- educate our child
- try not to smack them
- use manners
- spend time with them
- respect our child
- be fair
- teach morals
- trust our child
- understand that your child needs to experience life
- give privacy
- teach the difference between right and wrong
- love and care for our child
- apply curfews

Session 5 - Thinking ahead

Raising awareness around how parenthood might effect future plans and aspirations.

Participants were asked to complete the 'thinking ahead' questionnaire then to draw up a list of:

The likely effects becoming a parent would have on future education, work and social life.
Who should have responsibility for looking after the child.
Who you could look to for support.

The main topics listed were as follows:

Miss out on school and study time
Could not go to College, University
No time to go out
Could not get a good job
Could not go out with your friends
You could not stay on at school
Less money to spend on yourself
No time for yourself
You would be more stressed
Less choice of a good education or career

All participants felt that both parents should share the responsibility

Who could you look to for support

Friends
Partner
Boyfriend/Girlfriend
Professionals

Session 6 - Course Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an extensive Evaluation Form, which was gender coded (01 for boys). this method was utilised to enable gender specific analysis to be undertaken and controlled for pupils ticking the incorrect box.

Monifieth High School
Evaluation Form

Now that you have completed the above course we would like to ask you a number of questions which will provide us with essential feedback on your feelings about it. Your response is confidential and you are not requested to identify yourself in any way.

Before you did this course had you ever given much thought to what being a parent actually entailed?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Now that you have completed the course, how has it affected your perceptions of parenthood? Tick the statement which most closely reflects how you now feel.

It has:

- Made no difference to how I feel about becoming a parent one day ☐
- Made me a lot more aware about what being a parent involves ☐
- Changed my perceptions completely about parenthood but has not put me off becoming a parent one day ☐
- Put me off ever becoming a parent ☐

Who do you feel should carry the MAIN responsibility for the care and upbringing of a child. Please tick ONE of the following:

Mother	☐	Childminder	☐
Father	☐	Grandparents	☐
Both Parents	☐	Teachers	☐

Do you feel that the course has helped to give a better understanding of your own parent(s) or carers and the decisions they have to make in relation to you?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered YES to Q4 please indicate in your own words how you now feel towards your parent(s)/carers in the light of what you have learned on the course

5. Do you feel that the course has improved your relationships with the people in your life who have responsibilities towards you? Please tick the following boxes as they apply to you

Has it changed your relationship with your:

Mother/Female Carer	YES		NO	
Father/Male Carer	YES		NO	
Teachers	YES		NO	

If you answered YES to any of the above please tell us in what way has it improved your relationships with these people

Education For Parenthood Course
Course Content and Delivery

6. Do you feel the course material was

Relevant	YES		NO	
Interesting	YES		NO	
Informative	YES		NO	

7. Could the course have included other topics which you feel should have been covered?

8. Was the time spent on each course subject sufficient?

YES NO

If you answered NO please indicate which subjects you feel we should spend more time on

9. Do you feel that the course delivery was

Clear and easily understood?	YES		NO	
Were the course leaders helpful?	YES		NO	
If you had any queries were they clearly explained?	YES		NO	

10. Do you think that a PSE class in school is the most suitable way to deliver a course like this?

YES NO

If not where else do you feel would be more appropriate to hold a course like this

Finally before you return this questionnaire is there anything further you would like to say about the course. There may be something you feel you would like us to know about or there may be something you feel strongly about which you did not get an opportunity to say. We are anxious to hear what you think so do take this chance to write it down in the space below.

If not, thank you for taking the time to complete this form.

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Save the Children

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